



Albany State University  
**POTENTIAL. REALIZED.**



# **Protocol for the Acutely Distressed, Potentially Suicidal and Suicidal Student**

*The preparation of this protocol is a joint effort of ASU Center for Counseling and Student Disability Services (CSDC), Albany State University RAM: Risk Observation Council (ASU RAM: ROC) and the “We Are One ASU” Campus Suicide Prevention Grant team. “We Are One ASU” is funded through SAMHSA’s Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Initiative.*

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	
<b>Purpose of Protocol .....</b>	
<b>ASU Suicide Protocol Flowchart .....</b>	
<b>IMMINENT danger and has attempted suicide ON campus.....</b>	
<b>IMMINENT danger and has attempted suicide ON campus INSIDE CLASSROOM.....</b>	
<b>IMMINENT danger and has attempted suicide OFF campus.....</b>	
<b>THREAT of suicide ON campus.....</b>	
<b>THREAT of suicide OFF campus.....</b>	
<b>THOUGHTS of suicide ON campus.....</b>	
<b>THOUGHTS of suicide OFF campus.....</b>	
<b>Suicidal Behavior ON campus (non- emergency).....</b>	
<b>Suicidal Behavior OFF campus (non-emergency).....</b>	
<b>Student has COMMITTED suicide ON campus.....</b>	
<b>Student has COMMITTED suicide OFF campus.....</b>	
<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Important Phone Numbers – ASU Campus.....</b>	
<b>Definitions of Terms Related to Suicide.....</b>	
<b>SAMHSA Warnings of Suicide.....</b>	
<b>Suicide Do's &amp; Don't's.....</b>	
<b>ASU Suicide Incident Reporting Form .....</b>	
<b>ASU Campus-Community Resource Directory.....</b>	
<b>Student Re-entry.....</b>	
<b>References .....</b>	

## **Introduction**

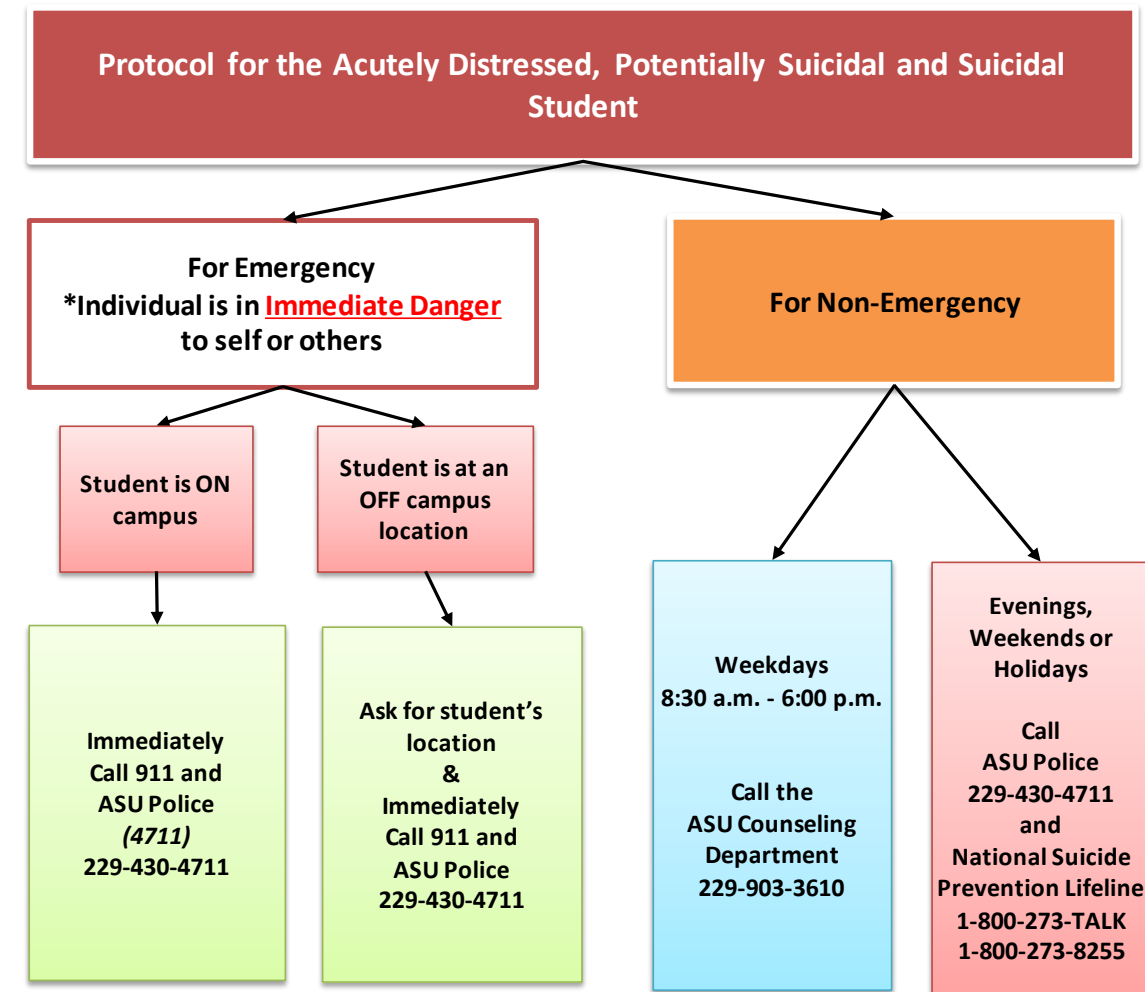
The growing mental health needs of students in institutions of higher education have captured the attention of researchers, college administrators and policy makers. The challenge confronting colleges and universities is clear from the summary of the results of the 2011 National Survey of Counseling Center Directors which reported 87 student suicides in the past year. 20% of these were current or former center clients, 73% were males, 80% were undergraduates and only 21% of the suicides occurred on or near campus. 86% were Caucasian, 7% were Asian or Pacific Islanders and 3% were African American. To the extent that it was known, 80% of the students were depressed, 46% had relationship problems, 17% had academic problems, 13% were on psychiatric medication, and 15% were known to have had previous psychiatric hospitalizations (Gallagher, 2012).

Suicide is a leading cause of death among youth attending colleges and universities in the United States; however, despite a rise in previous decades the rate has been stable or decreasing since the early 90s (Schwartz, 2006; Schwartz, 2011). College and university students have significantly lower risk of suicide than peers their age not in school (Schwartz, 2011).

## **Purpose of Protocol**

All college and university campuses need to be aware of the need to be prepared to deal with students who are under extreme emotional distress. Some students who are under stress may have suicidal thoughts, ideation or attempt suicide. So it is very important that all universities and colleges develop protocols so that the campus can handle crisis situations in a methodical and consistent manner rather than react to such situations by making “ad hoc decisions (Jed Foundation, 2014).

## ASU Suicide Protocol Flowchart



## Suicide Protocol and Procedures

**Note:** All procedures MUST be followed by the faculty and staff of Albany State University

### **IMMINENT Danger and has Attempted Suicide ON campus:**

1. **Immediately Call 911** and ASU Police Department (ASU PD) (229) 430- 4711
2. **Take any threat of self-harm seriously**
3. Please **remain calm and call/send for help.**
4. The appropriate staff resource or university crisis/emergency team should be mobilized. This brings additional people to the scene to help.
5. Please **DO NOT** transport student in a personal vehicle for safety and legal liability. If the student changes his/her mind about cooperating, you can be in a dangerous situation, both for yourself and the student.
6. Please remain with the student until proper authorities arrive to secure the location.  
**Do not leave the person alone.**
7. ASU PD will take charge, assess and secure the location, isolate the student away from large crowds and spectators.
8. We want to keep other students away from the student in crisis, to keep the situation from getting confused, to ensure safety and to prevent contagion/anxiety problems from developing in the general student body.
9. ASU PD will contact the Counseling Director, and/or Housing Director and/or other resource persons at Albany State University.
10. ASU PD or the Counseling Director will determine who will accompany the student to the medical facility and also contact Student Affairs.
11. If a student needs to be transported to a psychiatric facility for further evaluation, that process will be more productive if the ASU PD or Counseling Director and/or staff contact the facility, either by phone or in person, to give them the information about what has been going on. This accurate information will help the personnel there do a better evaluation.
12. ASU PD or the Vice President for Student Affairs will contact family members or the guardian of the student if necessary.
13. The Counseling Department will provide counseling to those who may have been affected by the events.
14. File a report of incident. It is very important to have proper documentation of the incident.
15. Stress debriefing is helpful to allow people to start to work through the emotional aspects of the experience. Some students and staff may want additional mental health type services.

16. Anticipate a brief window of intense and varied reactions among the students. Some students will want to talk about the episode for a brief period, and then want to re-focus back on other events in their daily life. A few students may have a prolonged preoccupation with the events. Some students will not see themselves as being affected by the event. Accept what they say, but tell them that this might change over time.

**IMMINENT Danger and has Attempted Suicide ON Campus INSIDE CLASSROOM:**

1. **Immediately Call 911** and ASU Police Department **(229) 430- 4711.**
2. **Take any threat of self-harm seriously**
3. Please **remain calm and call/send for help.**
4. The appropriate staff resource or university crisis/emergency team should be mobilized. This brings additional people to the scene to help.
5. Please **DO NOT** transport student in personal vehicle for safety and legal liability.
6. The instructor will remain with the student and secure the location until proper authorities arrive.
7. ASU PD will take charge, assess, secure the location, isolate the student away from large crowds and spectators, and also arrange for emergency transportation if necessary.
8. ASU PD will contact the Counseling Director, Housing Director and/or other resource person at Albany State University.
9. ASU PD or the Counseling Director will determine who will accompany the student to the medical facility and also contact Student Affairs.
10. ASU PD or Counseling Department will contact the family members or guardian of the student if necessary.
11. The Counseling Department will provide counseling to those who may have been impacted by the events.
12. File a report of incident. It is very important to have proper documentation of the incident.
13. Stress debriefing is helpful to allow people to start to work through the emotional aspects of the experience. Some students and staff may want additional mental health type services.
14. Anticipate a brief window of intense and varied reactions among the students. Some students will want to talk about the episode for a brief period, and then want to re-focus back on other events in their daily life. A few students may have a prolonged preoccupation with the events. Some students will not see themselves as being affected by the event. Accept what they say, but tell them that this might change over time.

### **IMMINENT Danger and has Attempted Suicide OFF campus**

1. **Immediately Call 911.**
2. **Take any threat of self-harm seriously**
3. Please **remain calm and call/send for help.**
4. Please **DO NOT** transport student personal vehicle for safety and legal liability.
5. Please remain with the student at the scene until proper authorities arrive to secure the location.
6. The person dealing with the student needs to determine the “likelihood to flee.” Some suicidal people may be cooperative with the intervention process; others may be unstable and uncooperative. The level and nature of response needs to reflect these differences.
7. Albany Police Department will assess and secure the location and isolate the student from large crowds and spectators and also arrange for emergency transportation is necessary.
8. ASU PD will contact the ASU Counseling Director.
9. ASU PD or the Counseling Director will determine who will accompany the student to the medical facility and also contact Student Affairs.
10. ASU PD or Counseling Department will contact the family members or guardian of the student if necessary.
11. The Counseling Department will provide counseling to those who may have been impacted by the events.
12. File a report of incident. It is very important to have proper documentation of the incident.

### **THREAT of Suicide ON campus**

1. **Immediately Call 911 and ASU Police Department (229) 430- 4711.**
2. **Take any threat of self-harm seriously**
3. Please **remain calm and call/send for help**, if you are unable to handle the situation.
4. Encourage the student to call the ASU Counseling Department at **(229) 903-3610** or call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline **1-800-273-TALK (8255).**
5. Reassure the student that they are not alone and you are there to keep them safe.
6. The person dealing with the student needs to determine the “likelihood to flee,” access to weapons, and/or violence potential. Knowledge about previous behavior patterns is important and helpful. Some suicidal people may be cooperative with the

intervention process; others may be unstable and uncooperative. The level and nature of response needs to reflect these differences.

7. Please **Do NOT** leave the student alone or take the threat lightly or as a joke.
8. Please **Do NOT** suggest that the student go someplace else alone.
9. **Do NOT** pass on personal judgment or personal opinions.
10. **Do NOT** try to provide counseling. Recognize the limitations of your authority.
11. File a report of incident.

### **THREAT of Suicide OFF campus**

1. **Immediately Call 911** and report threat.
2. Please **remain calm and call/send for help**, if you are unable to handle the situation.
3. Encourage the student to call the ASU Counseling Department at **(229) 903-3610** or call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.
4. Reassure the student that they are not alone and you are there to keep them safe.
5. Please do not leave the student alone or take the threat lightly or as a joke.
6. The person dealing with the student needs to determine the “likelihood to flee.”  
Some suicidal people may be cooperative with the intervention process; others may be unstable and uncooperative. The level and nature of response needs to reflect these differences.
7. Please **DO NOT** suggest that the student go someplace else alone.
8. **DO NOT** pass on personal judgment or personal opinions.
9. **DO NOT** try to provide counseling. Recognize the limitations of your authority
10. File a report of incident. It is very important to have proper documentation of the incident.

### **THOUGHTS of Suicide ON campus**

1. Remain calm and call ASU PD at **(229) 430-4711** and also speak with the Counseling Department **(229) 903-3610** or call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.
2. Reassure the student that they are not alone and you are there to keep them safe.
3. **Do NOT** try to provide counseling. Recognize the limitations of your authority.
4. The person dealing with the student needs to determine the “likelihood to flee.”  
Some suicidal people may be cooperative with the intervention process; others may be unstable and uncooperative. The level and nature of response needs to reflect these differences.



5. File a report of incident. It is very important to have proper documentation of the incident.

### **THOUGHTS of Suicide OFF campus**

1. Remain calm and **911** or call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**
2. Reassure the student that they are not alone and you are there to keep them safe.
3. **Do NOT** try to provide counseling. Recognize the limitations of your authority.

### **Suicidal Behavior ON campus (Non-Emergency)**

1. Remain calm and call the ASU PD at **(229) 430-4711** and encourage the student to speak with the Counseling Department **(229) 903-3610** or call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.
2. Reassure the student that they are not alone and you are there to keep them safe.
3. **DO NOT** try to provide counseling. Recognize the limitations of your authority.
4. File a report of incident. It is very important to have proper documentation of the incident.

### **Suicidal Behavior OFF Campus (Non-Emergency)**

1. Remain calm and call **911** or call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.
2. Reassure the student that they are not alone and you are there to keep them safe.
3. **DO NOT** try to provide counseling. Recognize the limitations of your authority.

### **Student has COMMITTED Suicide ON Campus**

1. **Immediately call 911** and ASU Police Department **(229) 430- 4711**.
2. Please remain calm and send for help.
3. Please **DO NOT** transport student in personal vehicle for safety and legal liability.
4. Please remain with the student until proper authorities arrive to secure the location.
5. ASU PD will take charge assess and secure the location, isolate the student away from large crowds and spectators, and also arrange for emergency transportation.

6. ASU PD will contact the RAMROC Team, Counseling Director and Housing Director of Albany State University.
7. Isolate direct witnesses to a designated area away from the scene and from the other students. Have a staff person stay with them for support.
8. Keep staff and students away from the area around the student who has died. This area is considered a crime scene and should be left undisturbed for the subsequent police investigation.
9. ASU PD or the Counseling Director will determine who will accompany the student to the medical facility
10. The Counseling Director will contact Student Affairs and the Suicide Prevention Specialist.
11. ASU PD or the Counseling Department will contact family members or the guardian of the student if necessary.
12. The Counseling Department will provide counseling to those who may have been affected by the events.
13. File a report of incident. It is very important to have proper documentation of the incident.
14. Stress debriefing is helpful to allow people to start to work through the emotional aspects of the experience. Some students and staff may want additional mental health type services.
15. No statements should be made to the media.
16. The appropriate crisis team will prepare a memo to send to the ASU community to inform them about the incident.
17. Identify and put together a team to provide on-campus mental health support services if those services are requested.

**Student has COMMITTED suicide OFF campus**

1. **Immediately call 911.**
2. Please remain calm and wait for help to arrive.
3. Please **DO NOT** transport student in personal vehicle for safety and legal liability.
4. Please remain with the student until proper authorities arrive to secure the location.
5. Albany Police will take charge, assess and secure the location, isolate the student away from large crowds and spectators, and they will also arrange for emergency transportation.
6. Isolate direct witnesses to a designated area away from the scene and from the other students.

7. Keep staff and students away from the area around the student who has died. This area is considered a crime scene and should be left undisturbed for the subsequent police investigation.
8. Call the ASU PD and inform them about the incident.
9. Stress debriefing is helpful to allow people to start to work through the emotional aspects of the experience. Some students and staff may want additional mental health type services.
10. The appropriate crisis team will prepare a memo to send to the ASU community to inform them about the incident.
11. The RAM: ROC team will provide on-campus mental health support services if those services are requested.
12. No statements should be made to the media.

## Appendices



### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS – ASU CAMPUS

**Emergency Dial.....911**

**ASU Police - 24 hours/365 days**

**229-430-4711**

**Counseling and Disability Services (8:30 AM – 6:00PM)  
(Monday through Friday)**

**229- 903-3610**

## **Definitions of Terms Related to Suicide**

### **Suicide**

Suicide is death from injury, poisoning, or suffocation where there is evidence that a self-inflicted act led to the person's death (SPRC, 2014).

Suicide is defined as the act of intentionally ending one's own life (Nock et al., 2008).

### **Suicide ideation**

Suicide ideation refers to thoughts of engaging in behavior intended to end one's life (Nock et al., 2008).

### **Suicide plan**

Suicide plan refers to the formulation of a specific method through which one intends to die (Nock et al., 2008).

### **Suicide attempt**

Suicide attempt is a potentially self-injurious behavior with a nonfatal outcome, for which there is evidence that the person intended to kill himself or herself; a suicide attempt may or may not result in injuries (SPRC, 2014).

A suicide attempt should possess the following characteristics: (a) self-initiated, potentially injurious behavior; (b) presence of intent to die; and (c) nonfatal outcome (Apter, 2010).

### **Suicide survivor(s)**

Suicide survivors is defined as "the family members and friends who experience the suicide of a loved one" McIntosh (1993).

A suicide survivor is someone who experiences a high level of self-perceived psychological, physical, and/or social distress for a considerable length of time after exposure to the suicide of another person (Jordan and McIntosh, 2011).

### **Suicidal behavior**

Suicidal behavior refers to a spectrum of activities related to thoughts and behaviors that include suicidal thinking, suicide attempts, and completed suicide (SPRC, 2014).

### **Suicide Threat**

A suicide threat is any interpersonal action, verbal or nonverbal, without a direct self-injurious component that a reasonable person would interpret as communicating or suggesting that suicidal behavior might occur in the near future (Silverman & Berman, 2007).

## **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**

### **Warning Signs of Suicide**

These signs may mean someone is at risk for suicide. Risk is greater if a behavior is new or has increased and if seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.

- ❖ Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself.
- ❖ Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or buying a gun.
- ❖ Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live.
- ❖ Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain.
- ❖ Talking about being a burden to others.
- ❖ Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs.
- ❖ Acting anxious, agitated, or behaving recklessly.
- ❖ Sleeping too little or too much.
- ❖ Withdrawing or feeling isolated.
- ❖ Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- ❖ Displaying extreme mood swings

## **Suicide Do's & Don'ts**

- ❖ **DO call 911**
- ❖ **DO call ASU Police**
- ❖ **DO remain calm**
- ❖ **DO send for help**
- ❖ **Do remain with the student until proper authorities arrive on the scene**
- ❖ **Do recognize the limitations of your authority**
- ❖ **DO encourage the student to go to the ASU Counseling Department or call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline**
- ❖ **DO file a report**
  
- ❖ **DO NOT leave student alone**
- ❖ **DO NOT pass on personal judgment or personal opinions**
- ❖ **DO NOT try and counsel the student**
- ❖ **DO NOT transport student in personal vehicle for safety and legal liability**

## **Albany State University Suicide Incident Reporting Form**

**Date of Incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time of Incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age of Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Classification of Student** \_\_\_\_\_

**Did the student express or engage in any of the following? (Circle all that apply)**

1. Thoughts of Suicide      2. Attempted Suicide      3. Threat of Suicide  
4. Suicidal Behavior      5. Committed Suicide

**Name of Individual(s) who arrived on the scene first and placed the emergency call:**

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_ (4) \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Agency(s) or Person (s) Contacted:**

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_ (4) \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Agency (s) or Person (s) that took charge of the scene**

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_ (4) \_\_\_\_\_

**Name and Phone Contact Information of Witnesses**

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_ (4) \_\_\_\_\_

**Did student need transportation to medical facility? YES      NO      NOT SURE**

**If yes, Name of Transport Agency** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Person (s) Authorized to accompany student to medical facility**

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_



# ASU Campus-Community Resource Directory

## Emergency Dial.....911

Albany State University Student Health Services.....	(229) 420-4766
Albany State University ROTC Dept. ....	(229) 430-4791
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline .....	1- (800) - 273-TALK (8255)
Suicide Hotline .....	1-800-SUICIDE (2433)
Georgia Crisis and Access Line .....	1-800-715-4225
TalkZone (Peer Counselors) .....	1-800-475-TALK (8255)
Southwest Georgia Suicide Prevention Coalition .....	(229) 886-1130
Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital .....	(229) 312-1000
Albany Area Mental Health Crisis Line .....	(229) 430-4052
Behavioral Health Center at Phoebe .....	(229) 312-7000
Biblical Counseling Center of Sherwood Baptist Church .....	(229) 431-3101
Albany Area Community Service Board / Aspire .....	(229) 430-4140
Battered Women/Domestic Violence .....	1-800 - 334-2836
Sexual Assault Support .....	1-800 -223-5001
Self-Injury Support .....	1-800-DONT CUT (366-8288)
Depression Hotline – Support Group.....	1-800-826-3632
Crisis Pregnancy Center .....	1-800-560-0717
A.I.D.S. ....	1-800- 342-2437
National Alcohol/Drug Abuse Hotline .....	1-800-662-HELP (4357)
Georgia Poison Control Center .....	1-800- 282-5846
GLBT National Hotline .....	1-888-843-4564
GLBT National Youth Talkline.....	1-800-PRIDE (7743)
Trevor Lifeline .....	1-866-488-7386
State of Georgia Department of Veterans Services – Albany.....	(229) 430-1797
Veterans .....	1-877-VET2VET
Veterans Crisis Line.....	(800) 273-TALK (273-8255)

## **Student Re-entry**

Students who have made a suicide attempt are at increased risk to attempt to harm themselves again. Appropriate handling of the re-entry process following a suicide attempt is a critical part of suicide prevention. Keep in mind that the first three months to one year after an attempt are important to monitor dramatic changes in behavior and feelings. University personnel can help returning students by directly involving them in planning for their return to the university. This involvement helps the student to regain some sense of control.

A student who is withdrawn from the University, and/or a college residence hall may be considered for re-entry. The following steps should be followed:

1. A student wishing to be considered for re-entry should contact Counseling Department and provide appropriate documentation of behavioral change and resolution of the initial behavioral problem, including compliance with any conditions that may have been set for re-entry.
2. A student may apply for re-entry to the University, and/or a college residence hall no more than one time per term.
3. In assessing an application for re-entry, the RAM: ROC team shall: (i) in cases in which he or she determines that an additional mental health assessment is necessary, refer the student for assessment to a qualified, licensed mental health professional; (ii) receive, investigate, and examine appropriate relevant documentation, including assessments made by college referred mental health professionals, and, if applicable, licensed treating mental health professionals; (iii) contact the student's parents or legal guardians as permissible by law, if appropriate; (v) provide an opportunity for the student to meet with the RAM: ROC team discuss re-entry.
4. If based on the evidence presented, that there is not a significant risk that the behavior that required withdrawal will be repeated, the student's application for re-entry may be approved. Re-entry should only be permitted after the RAM: ROC team and the Office of Academic Affairs is satisfied with all the evidence that is provided.
5. The RAM: ROC team should have a plan of action that includes overall policies regarding student academic course requirements as well as other issues related to re-entry to the University. A copy of all such documentation should be provided to the appropriate department and the College of which the student is affiliated with.
6. If the application for reentry should be denied, the RAM: ROC team shall provide the student with a written explanation of the reasons for the denial and specify when the next request for re-entry may be considered.
7. A student may appeal the denial of reentry to the Provost within ten (10) business days after the delivery of the decision denying re-entry. The Provost shall make his or her determination on the appeal within ten (10) business days from receipt of the appeal.

Once the student is allowed to re-enter the university it is a good procedure is to assign a designated person to serve as the liaison. The liaison can be a staff in Student Counseling and Disability and/or any designee who is trusted by the student and parents/guardian.

His/her responsibility is to:

- a. Review and file written documents as part of the student's confidential health record.
- b. Serve as case manager for the student. Understand what precipitated the suicide attempt and be alert to what might precipitate another attempt. Be familiar with the practical aspects of the case, i.e. medications, full vs. partial study load recommendations.
- c. Help the student through re-admission procedures, monitor the re-entry, and serve as a contact for other staff members who need to be alert to reoccurring warning signs.
- d. Serve as a link with the parent/guardian, and with the written permission of the parent/guardian, serve as the university liaison with any external medical or mental health services providers supporting to the student.
- e. Prior to student's return, schedule a meeting between the designated liaison and other appropriate staff to discuss possible arrangements for services and to create an individualized re-entry plan. It may be appropriate for the liaison to meet with the family on the student's discharge from the hospital and/or return from their leave of absence.

## **References**

- Apter A. ( 2010). Clinical aspects of suicidal behavior relevant to genetics. *Eur Psychiatry*, 25, 257-9.
- Jordan, J.R.; McIntosh, J.L. (2011). *Suicide bereavement: Why study survivors of suicide loss?* pp. 3-17. In *Grief after Suicide*; Jordan, J.R., McIntosh, J.L., Eds.; New York: Routledge .
- McIntosh, J. Control group studies of suicide survivors: A review and critique. *Suicide Life Threat. Behav.* 1993, 23, 146-161.
- Nock, M.K. et al. (2008). Suicide and suicidal behavior. *Epidemiologic Reviews*, 30,133–154.
- Silverman, M.M., Berman, A.L., Sanddal, N.D et al. (2007). Rebuilding the tower of Babel: A revised nomenclature for the study of suicide and suicidal behaviors. Part 2: Suicide-related ideations, communications, and behaviors. *Suicide Life Threat Behav* , 37,264–77.
- SPRC (2014). Glossary of suicide prevention terms. Available at [www.sprc.org/library/glossary.pdf](http://www.sprc.org/library/glossary.pdf)